

General Assembly

January Session, 2003

Raised Bill No. 6535

LCO No. 3356

Referred to Committee on Planning and Development

Introduced by: (PD)

AN ACT CONCERNING APPLICATION OF THE CONVEYANCE TAX TO LAND CLASSIFIED AS FARM LAND, FOREST LAND OR OPEN SPACE LAND.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

- 1 Section 1. Section 12-107a of the general statutes is repealed and the
- 2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective July 1, 2003, and
- 3 applicable to sales, transfers, or changes in use of land classified as farm land,
- 4 forest land or open space land that occur on or after July 1, 2003):
- It is hereby declared [(a)] (1) that it is in the public interest to
- 6 encourage the preservation of farm land, forest land and open space
- 7 land in order to maintain a readily available source of food and farm
- 8 products close to the metropolitan areas of the state, to conserve the
- 9 state's natural resources and to provide for the welfare and happiness
- of the inhabitants of the state, [(b)] (2) that it is in the public interest to
- 11 prevent the forced conversion of farm land, forest land and open space
- 12 land to more intensive uses as the result of economic pressures caused
- by the assessment thereof for purposes of property taxation at values
- 14 incompatible with their preservation as such farm land, forest land and
- open space land, and [(c)] (3) that the necessity in the public interest of

- 16 the enactment of the provisions of sections 12-107b to 12-107e,
- 17 inclusive, as amended by this act, and section 12-504f, is a matter of
- 18 legislative determination.
- 19 Sec. 2. Section 12-107b of the general statutes is repealed and the
- 20 following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective July 1, 2003, and
- 21 applicable to sales, transfers, or changes in use of land classified as farm land,
- 22 forest land or open space land that occur on or after July 1, 2003):
- When used in sections 12-107a to 12-107e, inclusive, as amended by
- 24 <u>this act</u>:
- [(a) The term "farm] (1) "Farm land" means any tract or tracts of
- 26 land, including woodland and wasteland, constituting a farm unit;
- [(b) The term "forest] (2) "Forest land" means any tract or tracts of
- 28 land aggregating twenty-five acres or more in area bearing tree growth
- 29 in such quantity and so spaced as to constitute in the opinion of the
- 30 State Forester a forest area and maintained in the opinion of the State
- 31 Forester in a state of proper forest condition and such land consists of
- 32 (1) one tract of land of twenty-five or more contiguous acres, which
- 33 acres may be in contiguous municipalities, (2) two or more tracts of
- 34 land aggregating twenty-five acres or more in which no single
- 35 component tract shall consist of less than ten acres or (3) any tract of
- land which is contiguous to a tract owned by the same owner which
- 37 has been designated as forest land by the State Forester, provided land
- 38 designated by the State Forester as forest land in accordance with
- 39 section 12-107d prior to July 1, 1976, shall not be subject to the
- 40 provisions of subdivisions (1) to (3), inclusive, of this subsection;
- [(c) The term "open] (3) "Open space land" means any area of land,
- 42 including forest land, land designated as wetland under section 22a-30
- and not excluding farm land, the preservation or restriction of the use
- 44 of which would (1) maintain and enhance the conservation of natural
- 45 or scenic resources, (2) protect natural streams or water supply, (3)
- 46 promote conservation of soils, wetlands, beaches or tidal marshes, (4)

- 47 enhance the value to the public of abutting or neighboring parks,
- 48 forests, wildlife preserves, nature reservations or sanctuaries or other
- 49 open spaces, (5) enhance public recreation opportunities, (6) preserve
- 50 historic sites or (7) promote orderly urban or suburban development;
- [(d)] (4) The word "municipality" means any town, consolidated town and city, or consolidated town and borough;
- [(e) The term "planning] (5) "Planning commission" means a planning commission created pursuant to section 8-19;
- [(f) The term "plan] (6) "Plan of conservation and development" means a plan of development, including any amendment thereto, prepared or adopted pursuant to section 8-23.
- Sec. 3. Section 12-107c of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2003, and applicable to sales, transfers, or changes in use of land classified as farm land that occur on or after July 1, 2003*):
 - (a) An owner of land may apply for its classification as farm land on any grand list of a municipality by filing a written application for such classification with the assessor thereof not earlier than thirty days before or later than thirty days after the assessment date, provided in a year in which a revaluation of all real property in accordance with section 12-62 becomes effective such application may be filed not later than ninety days after such assessment date. The assessor shall determine whether such land is farm land and, if such assessor determines that it is farm land, he or she shall classify and include it as such on the grand list. In determining whether such land is farm land, such assessor shall take into account, among other things, the acreage of such land, the portion thereof in actual use for farming or agricultural operations, the productivity of such land, the gross income derived therefrom, the nature and value of the equipment used in connection therewith, and the extent to which the tracts comprising such land are contiguous.

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- (b) An application for classification of land as farm land shall be made upon a form prescribed by the Commissioner of Agriculture and shall set forth a description of the land, a general description of the use to which it is being put, a statement of the potential liability for tax under the provisions of sections 12-504a to [12-504e] 12-504f, inclusive, as amended by this act, and such other information as the assessor may require to aid the assessor in determining whether such land qualifies for such classification.
 - (c) Failure to file an application for classification of land as farm land within the time limit prescribed in subsection (a) and in the manner and form prescribed in subsection (b) shall be considered a waiver of the right to such classification on such assessment list.
- (d) Any person aggrieved by the denial of any application for the classification of land as farm land shall have the same rights and remedies for appeal and relief as are provided in the general statutes for taxpayers claiming to be aggrieved by the doings of assessors or boards of assessment appeals.
- Sec. 4. Section 12-107d of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2003, and applicable to sales, transfers, or changes in use of land classified as farm land that occur on or after July 1, 2003*):
- (a) An owner of land may file a written application with the State Forester for its designation by the State Forester as forest land. When such application has been made, the State Forester shall examine such application and, if the State Forester determines that it is forest land, said forester shall issue a triplicate certificate designating it as such, and file one copy of such certificate in the State Forester's office, furnish one to the owner of the land and file one in the office of the assessor of the municipality in which the land is located.
- 107 (b) When the State Forester finds that it is no longer forest land, the 108 State Forester shall issue a triplicate certificate cancelling the

designation of such land as forest land, and file one copy of such certificate in the State Forester's office, furnish one to the owner of the land and file one in the office of such assessor.

- (c) An owner of land designated as forest land by the State Forester may apply for its classification as forest land on any grand list of a municipality by filing a written application for such classification with the assessor thereof not earlier than thirty days before or later than thirty days after the assessment date and, if the State Forester has not cancelled the designation of such land as forest land as of a date at or prior to the assessment date such assessor shall classify such land as forest land and include it as such on the grand list, provided in a year in which a revaluation of all real property in accordance with section 12-62 becomes effective such application may be filed not later than ninety days after such assessment date in such year.
- (d) An application to the State Forester for designation of land as forest land shall be made upon a form prescribed by the State Forester and approved by the Commissioner of Environmental Protection and shall set forth a description of the land and such other information as the State Forester may require to aid in determining whether such land qualifies for such designation. An application to an assessor for classification of land as forest land shall be made upon a form prescribed by such assessor and approved by the Commissioner of Environmental Protection and shall set forth a description of the land and the date of the issuance by the State Forester of the certificate designating it as forest land and a statement of the potential liability for tax under the provisions of sections 12-504a to [12-504e] 12-504f, inclusive, as amended by this act.
- (e) Failure to file an application for classification of land as forest land within the time limit prescribed in subsection (c) of this section and in the manner and form prescribed in subsection (d) of this section shall be considered a waiver of the right to such classification on such assessment list.

- 141 (f) The municipality within which land designated as forest land by 142 the State Forester is situated or the owner of land which the State 143 Forester has refused to designate as such may appeal from the decision 144 of the State Forester to the superior court for the judicial district within 145 which such municipality is situated. Such appeal shall be taken within 146 thirty days after the issuance of the certificate designating such land as 147 forest land or the refusal to issue such certificate, as the case may be, 148 and shall be brought by petition in writing with proper citation signed 149 by competent authority to the adverse party at least twelve days before 150 the return day. The Superior Court shall have the same powers with 151 respect to such appeals as are provided in the general statutes with 152 respect to appeals from boards of assessment appeals.
 - (g) An owner of land aggrieved by the denial of any application to the assessor of a municipality for classification of land as forest land shall have the same rights and remedies for appeal and relief as are provided in the general statutes for taxpayers claiming to be aggrieved by the doings of assessors or boards of assessment appeals.
 - Sec. 5. Section 12-107e of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2003, and applicable to sales, transfers, or changes in use of land classified as open space land that occur on or after July 1, 2003*):
 - (a) The planning commission of any municipality in preparing a plan of development for such municipality may designate upon such plan areas which it recommends for preservation as areas of open space land, provided such designation is approved by a majority vote of the legislative body of such municipality. Land included in any area so designated upon such plan as finally adopted may be classified as open space land for purposes of property taxation or payments in lieu thereof if there has been no change in the use of such area which has adversely affected its essential character as an area of open space land between the date of the adoption of such plan and the date of such classification.

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- (b) An owner of land included in any area designated as open space land upon any plan as finally adopted may apply for its classification as open space land on any grand list of a municipality by filing a written application for such classification with the assessor thereof not earlier than thirty days before or later than thirty days after the assessment date, provided in a year in which a revaluation of all real property in accordance with section 12-62 becomes effective such application may be filed not later than ninety days after such assessment date. The assessor shall determine whether there has been any change in the area designated as an area of open space land upon the plan of development which adversely affects its essential character as an area of open space land and, if the assessor determines that there has been no such change, said assessor shall classify such land as open space land and include it as such on the grand list. An application for classification of land as open space land shall be made upon a form prescribed by the Commissioner of Agriculture and shall set forth a description of the land, a general description of the use to which it is being put, a statement of the potential liability for tax under the provisions of section 12-504a to [12-504e] 12-504f, inclusive, as amended by this act, and such other information as the assessor may require to aid in determining whether such land qualifies for such classification.
- (c) Failure to file an application for classification of land as open space land within the time limit prescribed in subsection (b) of this section and in the manner and form prescribed in subsection (b) of this section shall be considered a waiver of the right to such classification on such assessment list.
- (d) Any person aggrieved by the denial by an assessor of any application for the classification of land as open space land shall have the same rights and remedies for appeal and relief as are provided in the general statutes for taxpayers claiming to be aggrieved by the doings of assessors or boards of assessment appeals.

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Sec. 6. Section 12-504a of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2003, and applicable to sales, transfers, or changes in use of land classified as farm land, forest land or open space land that occur on or after July 1, 2003*):

- (a) Any land which has been classified by the record owner thereof as open space land pursuant to section 12-107e, as amended by this act, if sold or transferred by him within a period of ten years from the time he first caused such land to be so classified, shall be subject to a conveyance tax applicable to the total sales price of such land, which tax shall be in addition to the tax imposed under sections 12-494 to 12-504, inclusive. Said conveyance tax shall be at the following rate: (1) Ten per cent of said total sales price if sold within the first year following the date of such classification; (2) nine per cent if sold within the second year following the date of such classification; (3) eight per cent if sold within the third year following the date of such classification; (4) seven per cent if sold within the fourth year following the date of such classification; (5) six per cent if sold within the fifth year following the date of such classification; (6) five per cent if sold within the sixth year following the date of such classification; (7) four per cent if sold within the seventh year following the date of such classification; (8) three per cent if sold within the eighth year following the date of such classification; (9) two per cent if sold within the ninth year following the date of such classification; and (10) one per cent if sold within the tenth year following the date of such classification. No conveyance tax shall be imposed on such record owner by the provisions of sections 12-504a to 12-504f, inclusive, as amended by this act and section 13 of this act, following the end of the tenth year after the date of such classification by [such] the record owner who caused such land to be so classified.
- (b) Any land which has been classified by the record owner thereof as farm land pursuant to section 12-107c, as amended by this act, or as forest land pursuant to section 12-107d, as amended by this act, if sold or transferred by him within a period of ten years from the time he

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acquired title to such land or from the time he first caused such land to be so classified, whichever is earlier, shall be subject to a conveyance tax applicable to the total sales price of such land, which tax shall be in addition to the tax imposed under sections 12-494 to 12-504, inclusive. Said conveyance tax shall be at the following rate: (1) Ten per cent of said total sales price if sold within the first year of ownership by such record owner; (2) nine per cent if sold within the second year of ownership by such record owner; (3) eight per cent if sold within the third year of ownership by such record owner; (4) seven per cent if sold within the fourth year of ownership by such record owner; (5) six per cent if sold within the fifth year of ownership by such record owner; (6) five per cent if sold within the sixth year of ownership by such record owner; (7) four per cent if sold within the seventh year of ownership by such record owner; (8) three per cent if sold within the eighth year of ownership by such record owner; (9) two per cent if sold within the ninth year of ownership by such record owner; and (10) one per cent if sold within the tenth year of ownership by such record owner. No conveyance tax shall be imposed by the provisions of sections 12-504a to 12-504f, inclusive, as amended by this act and section 13 of this act, following the end of the tenth year of ownership by [such] the record owner who caused such land to be so classified.

Sec. 7. Section 12-504b of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2003, and applicable to sales, transfers, or changes in use of land classified as farm land, forest land or open space land that occur on or after July 1, 2003*):

Said conveyance tax shall be due and payable by the particular grantor who caused such classification to be made to the town clerk of the town in which the property is entered upon the tax list at the time of the recording of his deed or other instrument of conveyance. Such conveyance tax and the revenues produced thereby shall become part of the general revenue of such municipality. No deed or other instrument of conveyance which is subject to tax under sections 12-504a to 12-504f, inclusive, as amended by this act and section 13 of this

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271 act, shall be recorded by any town clerk unless the tax imposed by said 272 sections has been paid. Upon the recording of such deed and the 273 payment of the required conveyance tax such land shall be 274 automatically declassified and the assessor shall forthwith record with 275 the town clerk a certificate setting forth that such land has been 276 declassified. Thereafter, such land shall be assessed at its fair market 277 value as determined by the assessor under the provisions of section 12-278 63 for all other property, until such time as a record owner may 279 reclassify such land.

Sec. 8. Section 12-504c of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2003, and applicable to sales, transfers, or changes in use of land classified as farm land, forest land or open space land that occur on or after July 1, 2003*):

The provisions of section 12-504a, as amended by this act, shall not be applicable to the following: [(a)] (1) Transfers of land resulting from eminent domain proceedings; [(b)] (2) mortgage deeds; [(c)] (3) deeds to or by the United States of America, state of Connecticut or any political subdivision or agency thereof; [(d)] (4) strawman deeds and deeds which correct, modify, supplement or confirm a deed previously recorded; [(e)] (5) deeds between husband and wife and parent and child when no consideration is received, except that a subsequent nonexempt transfer by the grantee in such cases shall be subject to the provisions of said section 12-504a as it would be if the grantor were making such nonexempt transfer; [(f)] (6) tax deeds; [(g) deeds releasing any property which is a security for a debt or other obligation; (h)] (7) deeds of foreclosure; (8) deeds of partition; [(i)] (9) deeds made pursuant to a merger of a corporation; [(j)] (10) deeds made by a subsidiary corporation to its parent corporation for no consideration other than the cancellation or surrender of the capital stock of such subsidiary; [(k)] (11) property transferred as a result of death [by devise or otherwise] when no consideration is received and in such transfer the date of acquisition or classification of the land for purposes of sections 12-504a to 12-504f, inclusive, as amended by this

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act, whichever is earlier, shall be the date of acquisition or classification by the decedent; [(1)] (12) deeds to any corporation, trust or other entity, of land to be held in perpetuity for educational, scientific, aesthetic or other equivalent passive uses, provided such corporation, trust or other entity has received a determination from the Internal Revenue Service that contributions to it are deductible under applicable sections of the Internal Revenue Code; [(m)] (13) land subject to a covenant specifically set forth in the deed transferring title to such land, which covenant is enforceable by the town in which such land is located, to refrain from selling, transferring, or developing such land in a manner inconsistent with its classification as farm land pursuant to section 12-107c, as amended by this act, forest land pursuant to section 12-107d, as amended by this act, or open space land pursuant to section 12-107e, as amended by this act, for a period of not less than eight years from the date of transfer, if such covenant is violated the conveyance tax set forth in this chapter shall be applicable at the rate multiplied by the market value as determined by the assessor which would have been applicable at the date the deed containing the covenant was delivered and, in addition, the town or any taxpayer therein may commence an action to enforce such covenant; [and (n)] (14) land the development rights to which have been sold to the state under chapter 422a; and (15) deeds to or from any limited liability company when the grantors or grantees are the same individuals as the principals or members of the limited liability company. If such action is taken by such a taxpayer, the town shall be served as a necessary party. Such action shall commence prior to the ninth year following the date of the deed containing such covenant.

Sec. 9. Section 12-504d of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2003, and applicable to sales, transfers, or changes in use of land classified as farm land, forest land or open space land that occur on or after July 1, 2003*):

Any person aggrieved by the imposition of a tax under the provisions of sections 12-504a to 12-504f, inclusive, as amended by this

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- act and section 13 of this act, may appeal therefrom as provided in sections 12-111, [and] 12-112 and 12-118. If the time for appealing to the board of assessment appeals has passed, the taxpayer may appeal
- 340 at the next regularly scheduled meeting.
- Sec. 10. Section 12-504e of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2003, and applicable to sales, transfers, or changes in use of land classified as farm land, forest land or open space land that occur on or after July 1, 2003*):

345 Any land which has been classified by the owner as farm land 346 pursuant to section 12-107c, as amended by this act, as forest land 347 pursuant to section 12-107d, as amended by this act, or as open space 348 land pursuant to section 12-107e, as amended by this act, if changed by 349 him, within a period of ten years of his acquisition of title, to use other 350 than farm, forest or open space, shall be subject to said conveyance tax 351 as if there had been an actual conveyance by him, as provided in 352 sections 12-504a and 12-504b, as amended by this act, at the time he 353 makes such change in use. [and classification. Said conveyance tax 354 schedule shall apply to fair market values as determined by the 355 assessor under the provisions of section 12-63 for all other property.] 356 For the purposes of this section: (1) The value of any such property 357 shall be the fair market value thereof as determined by the assessor in 358 conjunction with the most recent revaluation, and (2) the date used for 359 purposes of determining such tax shall be the date on which the use of 360 such property is changed, or the date on which the assessor becomes 361 aware of a change in use of such property.

Sec. 11. Section 12-504g of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2003, and applicable to sales, transfers, or changes in use of land classified as farm land, forest land or open space land that occur on or after July 1, 2003*):

The recording of any title deed, instrument or writing without the payment of the tax required by sections 12-504a, 12-504b, 12-504e to 12-504h, inclusive, as amended by this act and section 13 of this act, shall

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not prevent such recording from constituting constructive notice of such deed, instrument or writing.

Sec. 12. Section 12-504h of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2003, and applicable to sales, transfers, or changes in use of land classified as farm land, forest land or open space land that occur on or after July 1, 2003*):

Any such classification of farm land pursuant to section 12-107c, as amended by this act, of forest land pursuant to section 12-107d, as amended by this act, or of open space land pursuant to section 12-107e, as amended by this act, shall be deemed personal to the particular owner who requests and receives such classification and shall not run with the land. Any such land which has been classified by [the] a record owner [as farm land pursuant to section 12-107c, as forest land pursuant to section 12-107d, or as open space land pursuant to section 12-107e] shall remain so classified without the filing of any new application subsequent to such classification, notwithstanding the provisions of said sections 12-107c, 12-107d and 12-107e, until either of the following shall occur: (1) The use of such land is changed to a use other than that described in the application for the existing classification by said record owner, or (2) such land is sold or transferred by said record owner. Upon the sale or transfer of any such property, the classification of such land as farm land pursuant to section 12-107c, as amended by this act, forest land pursuant to section 12-107d, as amended by this act, or open space land pursuant to section 12-107e, as amended by this act, shall cease as of the date of sale or transfer. In the event that a change in use of any such property occurs, the provisions of section 12-504e, as amended by this act, shall apply in terms of determining the date of change and the classification of such land as farm land pursuant to section 12-107c, as amended by this act, forest land pursuant to section 12-107d, as amended by this act, or open space land pursuant to section 12-107e, as amended by this act, shall cease as of such date.

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Sec. 13. (NEW) (Effective July 1, 2003, and applicable to sales, transfers, or changes in use of land classified as farm land, forest land or open space land that occur on or after July 1, 2003)

Any land which has been classified by the owner as farm land pursuant to section 12-107c of the general statutes, as amended by this act, forest land pursuant to section 12-107d of the general statutes, as amended by this act, or open space land pursuant to section 12-107e of the general statutes, as amended by this act, if such ownership is changed within a period of ten years of his acquisition of title, shall be subject to said conveyance tax as if there had been an actual conveyance by him, provided in sections 12-504a and 12-504b of the general statutes, as amended by this act, at the time he makes such change in ownership. Said conveyance tax schedule shall apply to fair market value as determined by the assessor under provisions of section 12-63 of the general statutes for all other property.

This act shall take effect as follows:	
Section 1	July 1, 2003, and applicable to sales, transfers, or changes in use of land classified as farm land, forest land or open space land that occur on or after July 1, 2003
Sec. 2	July 1, 2003, and applicable to sales, transfers, or changes in use of land classified as farm land, forest land or open space land that occur on or after July 1, 2003
Sec. 3	July 1, 2003, and applicable to sales, transfers, or changes in use of land classified as farm land that occur on or after July 1, 2003
Sec. 4	July 1, 2003, and applicable to sales, transfers, or changes in use of land classified as farm land that occur on or after July 1, 2003
Sec. 5	July 1, 2003, and applicable to sales, transfers, or changes in use of land classified as open space land that occur on or after July 1, 2003
Sec. 6	July 1, 2003, and applicable to sales, transfers, or changes in use of land classified as farm land, forest land or open space land that occur on or after July 1, 2003

Sec. 7	July 1, 2003, and applicable to sales, transfers, or changes in use of land classified as farm land, forest land
Sec. 8	or open space land that occur on or after July 1, 2003
Sec. 8	July 1, 2003, and applicable to sales, transfers, or changes in use of land classified as farm land, forest land
	or open space land that occur on or after July 1, 2003
Sec. 9	July 1, 2003, and applicable to sales, transfers, or
	changes in use of land classified as farm land, forest land
	or open space land that occur on or after July 1, 2003
Sec. 10	July 1, 2003, and applicable to sales, transfers, or
	changes in use of land classified as farm land, forest land
	or open space land that occur on or after July 1, 2003
Sec. 11	July 1, 2003, and applicable to sales, transfers, or
	changes in use of land classified as farm land, forest land
	or open space land that occur on or after July 1, 2003
Sec. 12	July 1, 2003, and applicable to sales, transfers, or
	changes in use of land classified as farm land, forest land
	or open space land that occur on or after July 1, 2003
Sec. 13	July 1, 2003, and applicable to sales, transfers, or
	changes in use of land classified as farm land, forest land
	or open space land that occur on or after July 1, 2003

Statement of Purpose:

To clarify provisions relating to the imposition of an additional conveyance tax on land classified as farm, forest or open space land, in circumstances involving a sale, transfer of ownership or change in use and to clarify when the preferential property tax treatment of such properties ceases upon a sale, transfer or change of use.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]